

**Workshop #1: *What is Age Friendly Anyway? How it Benefits Agencies, Residents, Visitors, and Businesses***

**February 17, 2021, 10:30am to 12:00pm**

**Presenters:**



**Greg Olsen**

**Acting Director, New York State Office for the Aging**

Greg Olsen is the acting director of the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA). In this role, he is responsible for the development, implementation, and administration of programs and policies that help older New Yorkers and overseeing the administration of federal and state funded programs that assist more than 4.6 million older adults and 4+ million informal caregivers across New York State. Working with public and private partners at the state and local level, Greg is leading the effort to combat ageism, generalizations, and stereotypes about what aging is and demonstrating the value of not only the older population to their families, communities, and the state, but also the value of the network of aging

services professionals in addressing social determinants of health and their role in helping older adults maintain their independence with dignity. With almost 30 years of experience in a variety of capacities serving older New Yorkers and their families, Greg served as chief of staff and legislative and policy director for Assemblyman Steve Englebright, former chair of the Assembly Standing Committee on Aging. He was the first executive director of the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans and served as executive director of the New York State Coalition for the Aging, a nonprofit membership organization representing more than 200 community-based organizations providing non-medical long-term care to the state's older adult population. He received his master's degree in social work with a specialty in gerontology from Syracuse University's Maxwell School.



**Esther Greenhouse, MS, CAPS**

Ms. Greenhouse is the Strategic Director for one of the U.S.'s first Age-Friendly Centers for Excellence in Tompkins County, NY. A catalyst for positive change, Esther Greenhouse is a built environment strategist, consulting with municipalities, senior housing providers, and organizations to help them leverage the design of the built environment to address significant challenges and enable their people to thrive. She creates and develops innovative initiatives, such as Equity by Design, a collaboration with AARP International to generate a quantum leap for the creation of Enabling and Equitable Age-Friendly Housing and Multigenerational Communities. At Cornell University, she is an adjunct lecturer and an industry scholar in the Institute for Healthy Futures. She has been invited to

contribute her expertise by presenting for the Clinton Global Initiative, by co-authoring the American Planning Association's Aging in Community Policy Guide, and on the design of the U.S.'s first elder-focused emergency department.

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**Diane Kolack**

**Program Officer, New York Academy of Medicine**

Diane currently manages the New York Academy of Medicine's technical assistance program for Health and Age Across All Policies in New York State. She has 12 years of experience in health advocacy and community organizing and New York City and State policy. Through the Academy's Advancing Prevention Project, Diane developed and implemented webinars, learning collaboratives, and convenings to support local health departments, health systems, and community coalitions in their local implementation of the New York State Prevention Agenda. Before her public health work, Diane spent a decade managing a community-based law firm as a paralegal focused on older adults' services. She holds an MPH from the City University of New York's Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy.



**Nora OBrien-Suric, Ph.D.**

**President, Health Foundation for Western and Central NY**

Dr. OBrien-Suric became the president of the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York in 2017. She has over 20 years of experience in philanthropy; with The John A. Hartford Foundation and The Brookdale Foundation. Both foundations provide funding nationally to support services that enhance the quality of life and healthcare for older adults and their caregivers.

Earlier in her career, Dr. OBrien-Suric worked with community-based organizations focused on services to older adults, including the New York City Department for the Aging and the Institute on Law and Rights for Older Adults. Dr. OBrien-Suric established the position of Director of National and Internal Partnership at the International Longevity Centre Global Alliance; and served as the vice chair of the United Nations NGO Committee on Ageing, which provided consultation to the development of the United Nations International Plan on Action on Ageing in 2002.

Dr. OBrien-Suric holds a doctoral degree in social welfare from Hunter College School of Social Work, a master's degree in gerontology from the California State University at Dominguez Hills, and a certificate in geriatric mental health counseling from the University of Southern California Davis School.

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**Randy Hoak**

**Associate State Director, AARP NY**

Randy has worked in Aging for over 20 years. After fifteen years of leadership roles in community services and long-term care, Randy was tapped by Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz to serve as Commissioner of the Department of Senior Services, the Area Agency on Aging in Erie County. One of Randy's first orders of business at Erie County was to bring Erie County to AARP's Network of Age Friendly Communities. As Associate State Director – Community Outreach at AARP New York since 2016, Randy, with the assistance of many dedicated volunteers, works in Western and Central Upstate New York on regional initiatives, advocacy, and community engagement.



**Serena Stern**

Serena is the Best Practices and Communications Specialist for the Tompkins County Age-Friendly Center for Excellence. She is a graduate of Cornell University (BS '20) with a degree in Science, Environment & Health Communication. She has a passion for supporting older adults and their ability to thrive in their homes, healthcare spaces, and communities. Some of the base values that drive her work include improving patient experience and supporting compassion in healthcare.

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**Jeremy Xu**

Jeremy worked with an engaged research project in collaboration with the Tompkins County Age Friendly Center for Excellence in 2020, and he wrote a best practice report on an innovative multi-agency response to food insecurity of older adults and young children in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, supervised by Prof. Mildred Warner, Dr. Xue Zhang, and Teri Reinemann. He is expected to receive a dual B.S. degree in Nutrition from both Cornell University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University in Spring 2021 and will go on to pursue an MPP degree this Fall at the University of Chicago.